(c) the steps being taken by Government to finalize compassionate appointment in each case and by when appointments would be given?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Two Section supervisors of Central Telegraph Office, New Delhi expired in June, 2000. The details about the compassionate ground appointment to their dependents are as follows:—

(i) **Shri Om Prakash BR, SS(O); expired on 3.6.2000.**

His son, Shri Bhupender Kumar Sahrawat's case has already been approved for appointment on compassionate grounds for a Group 'C' post. He, however, could not be given appointment for want of vacancy in compassionate appointment quota.

(ii) **Shri Guna Nand Joshi, SS(O), expired on 10.6.2000.**

His son, Shri Vijay Prasad Joshi's case was considered but was not found a fit case for appointment on compassionate grounds.

(c) The compassionate ground appointment to the son of Shri Om Prakash BR will be given as and when the group 'C' vacancy arises in 5% Direct Recruitment Quota meant for compassionate appointments.

**SAARC Information Ministers' Conference.**

*628. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the resolutions adopted at the recent meeting of the Ministers of Information of SAARC member countries held at Islamabad to reduce and simplify visa restrictions on movement of journalists in the region;

(b) what follow up action has been taken by Government in this regard.

(c) whether Pak representatives including the Pak President General Musharraf used the opportunity to raise bilateral issues between India and Pakistan on the occasion; and

(d) if so, the details of the issues and proposals raised thereat and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) There was no resolution but a report of the meeting was adopted. The Ministers discussed the issue of free movement of media personnel within the region and in principle supported the idea as furthering these objectives of SAARC. They decided to present the matter to the SAARC Standing Committee for consideration.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Gen. Pervez Musharraf did raise bilateral matters particularly during a press meet. However, according to the SAARC Charter, bilateral and contentious issues are not to be raised during such meetings. This aspect was highlighted by our Minister for Information & Broadcasting who had attended the meeting.

**Telephone Facility in Villages of Uttaranchal**

*629. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no telephone facility in villages of Harara, Pinakot, Tolyon, Machhor, Bor and Bhonkhal villages of Patti Talla Salt in Almora district of Uttaranchal;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and by when this facility is likely to be provided in these areas; and

(c) the steps proposed by Government for development of telephone network in all the villages in Talla Salt and laying of Optical Fibre Cable in Almora?